

WHAT THE THISTLE LIVED TO SEE.

By Hans Christian Andersen.



P at the grand manor house there was a beautiful garden, well stocked with rare trees and flowers; guests at the house were delighted with it, and people who lived round about, both from the country and the market town, came on Sundays and holydays to ask permission to see the garden; whole schools, even, visited the place for the same purpose.

Outside the garden, close to the fence that ran along by the footpath, there stood an immense Thistle. So large was it, and so widely spread out from the root into its several green branches, that it might well be called a thistle-bush. No one took any notice of it except the old donkey that pulled the dairymaids' milk-cart. He made a long neck in the direction of the Thistle, and said, "You are lovely! I could eat you!" but the tether was too short to let him get near enough to eat it.

There was a large party at the house; aristocratic relations from the capital, some of them young and graceful girls. Amongst these was a lady from a long distance; she came, in fact, from Scotland, and was of a noble family, and rich in lands and gold—a bride well worth winning, said more than one young man, and their mothers too.

The young people amused themselves on the lawn, playing croquet; then they wandered about amongst the flowers, and each of the young ladies picked a flower and put it in the buttonhole of one of the young men. But the Scotch damsel looked round about for a long time, and declined one after another: none of the flowers seemed quite to her taste. At last she looked over the paling, just where the Thistle-bush stood outside with its reddish-blue hardy-looking flowers; she saw it, and smiling, asked the son of the house to pick one of these for her.

"It is the flower of Scotland," she said; "it blooms in the nation's coat-of-arms; I should like to have one."

So he plucked the finest, and pricked his fingers as much as if the sharpest briar thorn was growing on it.

She put the thistle-flower in the young man's buttonhole, and he felt himself highly honoured. Every one of the others would gladly

have given his garden flower to possess that given by the delicate hands of the young Scotch lady. And if the son of the house felt himself honoured, what did not the Thistle-plant feel? it was like dew and sunshine going right through it.

"I am something more than I think," it said to itself. "Indeed, my proper home is inside the fence, and not outside. One is strangely neglected in the world! but now I have got, at any rate, one of my family over the fence, and actually into a buttonhole!" To every bud as it came out and unfolded itself it related this event, and many days had not gone by, when the Thistle-plant heard—not from the people, nor from the birds' twittering, but from the air itself, which treasures up and communicates sound alike from the garden's most hidden pathways and from the chambers of the house, where doors and windows were standing open—that the young man who had received the thistle-flower from the dainty hand of the Scotch girl had now gained her hand, and her heart as well. They were a handsome couple, and the match was a good one.

"It was I who made it," observed the Thistle-plant, as it thought of the flower which it had given for the buttonhole. Every flower as it came out had to hear the circumstance.

"I shall certainly be transplanted into the garden!" thought the Thistle; "perhaps squeezed into a flowerpot—the most honourable position of all!"

And as the Thistle-plant thought about it, it seemed so real, that it said in complete conviction, "I am going into a flowerpot!" It promised every little bud as it came out that it, too, should go into a flowerpot, possibly into a buttonhole—that being the highest honour that could be attained; but not one of them got into a pot, still less into a buttonhole. They drank in air and light, feasted on sunshine by day and dew by night, bloomed, were courted by bees and hornets, —who were looking after the dowry, the honey in the flowers;—and the honey they took, but the flowers they left alone. "A pack of adventurers," said the Thistle-plant. "I wish I could stick them through, but I can't!"

The flowers hung their heads and pined away, but new ones came instead.

"You come as if you had been summoned on purpose. I am expecting every minute that we shall be on the other side of the fence."

One or two innocent daisies and a long thin piece of canary-grass stood and listened with profound admiration, and believed all it said.

The old donkey that belonged to the milk-cart looked longingly towards the blooming Thistle from the edge of the pathway, but his tether was too short to reach it.

And the Thistle-plant thought so long about the thistle of Scotland, of whose family it reckoned itself, that at last it fancied that it came from Scotland itself, and that it was its own parents who had grown in the royal coat-of-arms. That was a great thought, but a great thistle can of course have great thoughts.

"One is often of such distinguished descent that one does not need to know it," said the nettle which grew close by, and which had, moreover, a sort of suspicion that it might become muslin,* if it were properly treated.

And summer went, and autumn went: the leaves fell off the trees, the colours of the flowers got brighter and their scent fainter. The gardener's boy sang on the other side of the fence

"Up and down, to and fro,
That's all the Calendar can show."

The young pine-trees in the wood began to get impatient for Christmas, but Christmas was still a long way off.

"I am standing here yet," said the Thistle. "It looks as if nobody thought about me, and yet I made that match; they were betrothed, and they had the wedding, quite a week since: yes, I don't make a step forwards,—in fact, I can't!"

Still several weeks passed; the Thistle was standing with its last solitary flower, large and full: it had shot out near the root. The wind blew coldly over it, the colours faded, the glory departed; the flower-cup, large as the blossom of an artichoke, looked like a silvered sun-flower.

Down the garden came the young couple, now husband and wife; they went along by the fence, and the young wife looked over it.

"That large Thistle is still standing there," she said. "It has no more flowers now."

"There is still the ghost of the last," said he, pointing to the silvery shining remains of the flower—a flower itself.

* In Danish, and German also, muslin is called "nettle-cloth."—Tr.

"How beautiful it is!" said she; "we must have one like this carved in the frame of our picture."

And once more the young man had to get over the fence, and break the flower-cup off. It pricked his fingers, for he had called it "the ghost." And so it came into the garden and up to the house, and into the drawing-room. There there was a painting, "The young married couple." In the bridegroom's buttonhole a thistle-flower was painted. They talked about this, and about the seed-cup which they had brought in—the last, and now silvery glistening thistle flower, which the carver was to imitate in the frame.

And the air took their words out and bore them far around.

"What one *does* live to see!" said the Thistle-plant. "My first-born attained to a buttonhole, my latest-born to a frame: where shall I get myself?"

And the donkey stood by the side of the pathway and made eyes at the Thistle.

"Come to me, my heart's dearest! I cannot come to you, the tether is not long enough."

But the Thistle-plant did not answer; it stood more and more full of thought; it thought and it thought all the time to Christmas; and then the thought put forth its blossom.

"When one's children are well inside, a mother is contented to stand outside the palings."

"That is a creditable thought!" said the Sunbeam. "You, too, shall have a good place!"

"In a flowerpot or a frame?" asked the Thistle.

"In a Fairy Tale!" said the Sunbeam.

And this is it.

THE LITTLE FLOWER GIRL.

A TALE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

CHAPTER III.



OW long the poor little girl had slept it would be difficult to say, but when the good fruit woman returned to the spot where she had left the two children, only Marie was there, still sleeping soundly. Little Claude was nowhere to be seen; probably

he too had slept, and been taken away by some one attracted by his rich dress and beauty.

The fruit woman raised Marie gently in her arms, fearing to awaken her lest her cries for her brother should attract notice; she quietly left the place and hastened to her own home, where she hoped to comfort and console the poor child who had in so short a time been deprived of all she cared for, and who was now thrown on the pity and kindness of a total stranger. Happily for Marie, her kind friend was one who could feel for her sad and helpless condition. On awaking and finding herself alone in a strange place, and getting no answer to her calls for Claude, poor Marie gave way to sobs and cries that now seemed beyond her control. It was long before she could be pacified, and at last only by the hope—how vain a one the child knew not—that they might find her brother.

Time passed on, and our little Marie had become reconciled to her new position, and had attached herself to the kind woman, Jeanette by name, who had so befriended her. She, too, loved the child, but found her kind act had added greatly to the difficulty with which she had hitherto maintained herself and her blind mother; still she was far from regretting what she had done; she, however, thought that her adopted child might now in some way help to lighten the burden.

"Marie," said she to her one day, "it will not do for you to be idle, you must learn to work now."

"Work!" exclaimed Marie, "it's only poor people who work."

"And are you not poor, my child?" replied Jeanette.

"No, mamma is rich, so I can't be poor."

"Your mother is dead, Marie," said the good woman, gently but decidedly; "and you would have died too if I had not taken you; and now you are as poor as I am, and I have nothing but what I work for."

"But I can't work; I have never been taught to work, and I don't like it," persisted Marie.

"Marie," said Jeanette, sorrowfully, "you are a big girl now, and I can't earn enough to keep us all; I thought as you got older you would help me."

"So I will," interrupted Marie, as she threw her arms round her friend's neck, kissing her repeatedly; "tell me, *bonne mère*, what you want me to do."

"Oh! it won't be difficult," said Jeanette, pleased with this proof of her adopted child's affection and docility; "see this pretty basket; well, I shall fill it with flowers and fasten it round your waist, and then you must ask every one to buy, and say, 'Buy my pretty flowers, if you please!'" As if still further to encourage the child, she added, "and perhaps some day in going about the town you may meet your brother, for I think he must have been taken by some one whilst you were asleep, before I came back."

The tears started to Marie's eyes, and her face brightened as she exclaimed, "Oh then quick, quick! give me a basket, *chère bonne mère*, and let me go. Yes, yes; I will look everywhere for Claude, and oh, if I find him, then if you would let him live with us, I would work so hard."

CHAPTER IV.

WE now find Marie endeavouring to earn her own bread, as many hundreds of the descendants of the noblest families in France were driven to do by the troubles of that unhappy period when the land was wholly in the power of the revolutionary tyrants who had either murdered or driven into exile all who had either rank or fortune.

Marie soon got accustomed to her new employment; her engaging appearance and manner, as she offered her pretty bouquets, attracted many customers, so that she generally ended the day with an empty basket, and the little pockets of her apron well filled. She was well pleased with her success and at the satisfaction it afforded to the kind woman who was to her as a mother; but the great longing of her own heart was unsatisfied; she neither saw nor heard anything of little Claude; still the hope of finding him accompanied her as she daily started on her allotted task, which had, however, become far from an irksome one.

CHAPTER V.

IN the year 1800 peace and tranquillity once more dawned upon France, and hopes were entertained that the days of terror and republican tyranny were at an end. Many, in consequence, of those who had been proscribed, or who had fled to save their lives, ventured to return to their country, to find, alas! in too many cases, their homes destroyed, their lands possessed by strangers, and their families either dead or banished in poverty to other countries. It was on the 15th of August

of that year that the inhabitants of Nantes ventured once again to celebrate the Festival of the Virgin Mary, and the town once more wore a holiday appearance, the people for the time at least forgetting the dark scenes of which it had been the theatre.

According to the custom in Roman Catholic countries, Marie's birthday, or fête day, was kept on the festival of the saint after whom she was named; Marie was therefore dressed in her holiday suit on the day we speak of, and had obtained leave to attend in the little shops instead of going on her daily errand. She was busily occupied in making up bouquets and in tastefully arranging the fresh and tempting-looking fruit, when a little boy, her first customer that morning, entered and begged her to prepare a bouquet for him, of such flowers as he should select.

"I must have a rose," said he; "oh! and this pretty pink." Marie interrupted him, and pointing to a bit of heliotrope, asked if he would have that too. "Yes, I should like that," said the child, "if it would not make it too dear."

"But you would like it to be pretty," said Marie, "as I dare say it is for your mother."

"I have no mother," replied the little fellow, with a sigh.

"Oh! I am sorry;" but a stranger at that moment entering the shop, Marie turned to attend to him, asking him what he required.

"Some of your fruit, my little girl," replied the stranger, "for the day is hot and I am tired and thirsty."

"Choose whatever you like, sir," said Marie; "no, not those, the finest are here," she added, as she uncovered some peaches over which fresh vine leaves had been placed. Then offering a seat to the stranger, she again turned to her little customer, asking with childish curiosity who his bouquet was intended for.

"For my sister," replied the little fellow.

"Ah! then you have a sister?"

"I hope so," was the reply.

"What!" exclaimed Marie; "are you not sure of it? that is odd."

"I do not know where she is," said the boy.

"Then how can you give her the bouquet?"

"My sister's name is Marie," was the reply; "and I have an image of the Virgin at home, and as her name is Marie, I will put my bouquet in her hands, and she will keep it for my sister Marie."

"What is your own name?" interrupted Marie, eagerly.

"I am called Claude," replied the child.

"I too had a brother Claude, but I lost him one day, one terrible day that many children were thrown into the Loire."

"That was the day I lost my sister." Marie let fall the bouquet she was arranging, and in a trembling voice exclaimed, "Oh! tell me what do you recollect about that day!"

"I believe I was only four years old then," said Claude, "but I can remember everything as if it was yesterday. Mamma was killed as we were walking near a wood, then some one put me and my sister into a cart of hay, and gave us some black bread, which I couldn't eat; then we were left in a large place full of children. Marie fell asleep, and a good, kind gentleman came and took me away, and I have been with him ever since."

"Then you are my own brother, my dear little Claude!" exclaimed Marie, as she rushed to him and threw her arms round his neck, in an ecstasy of delight.

"Oh, then," said the little fellow, as he returned his sister's embrace and clapped his hands with delight, "I can give you my bouquet, my real sister Marie; oh! I am so happy."

During this little scene the stranger had been attentively watching the two children; he now approached Marie, and in a tone of anxiety he asked, "My little girl, can you tell me what other name you had besides Marie?"

"Oh, I remember," interrupted Claude, "Marie told me it was Paire."

"No, no," said his sister, smiling through her tears, "Beaurepaire."

"Then, thank God, He has given me back my children. Yes," said he, as he laid a hand on the shoulder of each, "I am your father, the Baron de Beaurepaire; I was to have been arrested the night you speak of, and was warned not to return home. I was assured that no one would harm my wife or little ones;" the baron paused, overcome by emotion: "but no one was safe," he added after a while, "in those terrible days; she, alas! perhaps came to prevent my return and so urge me to escape."

It will easily be believed that grief for his wife's sad fate cast a gloom over the happiness of recovering his children. Marie, too, wept as she saw her father's grief, and recalled the events of the night that deprived her of her mother.

CHAPTER VI.

Too much absorbed by their own feelings of surprise and joy, not unmingled with those of sorrow, none of the little party had noticed the entrance of Jeanette from the room at the back of the little shop. The good woman was not slow in perceiving what had occurred; she had never contemplated the return of the father of her adopted child, and great was her grief at seeing she was likely so soon to lose one for whom she felt all a mother's affection.

On being released from her father's embrace Marie perceived the kind woman weeping silently at the further end of the little shop; she flew to her, and throwing her arms round her neck, she kissed her affectionately, saying as she did so—

"Come, *bonne mère*, come to papa and little Claude." Monsieur de Beaurepaire advanced to meet her, and taking both her hands in his, he said, in a voice of deep feeling, "My good woman, I know not how to thank you for what you have done. I owe my child's life to you; how can I repay you for the happiness I now feel—how can I show my gratitude?"

"When I saved the dear child from death I looked for no reward, I did not wish for any," said poor Jeanette, still weeping bitterly; "I only wanted to save them, so young and so helpless, from a terrible death."

Tears started to the baron's eyes as he heard of the fate from which the kindhearted woman had rescued his children. "Oh, sir," she continued, "if you had seen the poor little creatures, as I did, left there to die, and then one would not be saved without the other, oh! who would not have done as I did? I wanted to take both, and my only sorrow was not to have been able to find Marie's brother, and now I shall lose *her*!"

"But your little Marie will always love you, *chère bonne mère*," said she, and interrupting her and renewing her kisses and words of endearment. Monsieur de Beaurepaire was well aware that time only could soften poor Jeanette's grief at having to part with her adopted child; but he insisted on her going to stay for some days with Marie at her future home, thinking this would lessen the pain of the parting which was inevitable. He then told her he had only lately returned to Nantes, and had made every effort to obtain tidings of his wife and children; that very morning he had been employed in

endeavours to trace them, till, overcome with heat and fatigue, he had stopped at the little shop to rest. "It must have been Providence," said he, "who guided me here, and my little Claude's bouquet did the rest."

"I have given one every year," said the boy, "on Marie's fête day."

"Ah! I shall keep this one," interrupted Marie, as she embraced Claude; "I will put it in a glass case and keep it all my life."

Having arranged with Jeanette that she should accompany Marie, Monsieur de Beaurepaire left them to make their preparations, and hastened with Claude to thank the kind man who had so befriended him. He was agreeably surprised to find in Claude's protector an old and valued retainer of the family, who was rejoiced to learn that he had been the means of rescuing the child of one whom he had known and served in happier days, but of whose fate he had been wholly ignorant.

The little party were shortly assembled at a small villa which the Baron de Beaurepaire had taken near the town of Nantes. Jeanette passed some days there and left loaded with presents from her adopted child and the baron.


On returning to her own home, Jeanette looked in vain for the little shop: where was she—what had become of it? All was presently explained: her old mother stood at the door of a pretty-looking shop. During the good woman's absence, the baron had improved and ornamented her little dwelling; a new and large bay window had taken the place of the old and small one. Inside all was refitted, and a pretty assortment of glass and china vases set off to advantage the beautiful flowers and fruit with which the shop was well stocked. Jeanette's delight was great, greater still when she recollected she owed it all to her adopted child's affection and to her father's gratitude. The good woman's happiest days were those on which Marie came to see her, or that she spent with Marie at her own home.

Jeanette had done a good and Christian-like act, looking for no reward; but, as is sometimes the case, even in this life, she had her recompense, and she could, moreover, look for that mercy hereafter which is promised to those who show it: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

L. M. D.

AMELIA AND THE DWARFS.

By the Author of Mrs. Overthway's Remembrances.

 MY godmother's grandmother knew a good deal about the fairies. Her grandmother had seen a fairy rade on a Roodmas Eve, and she herself could remember a copper vessel of a queer shape which had been left by the elves on some occasion at an old farm-house among the hills. The following story came from her, and where she got it I do not know. She used to say it was a pleasant tale, with a good moral in the inside of it. My godmother often observed that a tale without a moral was like a nut without a kernel; not worth the cracking. (We called fireside stories "cracks" in our part of the country.) This is the tale :

AMELIA.

A couple of gentlefolk once lived in a certain part of England. (My godmother never would tell the name either of the place or the people, even if she knew it. She said one ought not to expose one's neighbours' failings more than there was due occasion for.) They had an only child, a daughter, whose name was Amelia. They were an easy-going, good-humoured couple; "rather soft," my godmother said, but she was apt to think anybody "soft" who came from the southern shires, as these people did. Amelia, who had been born farther north, was by no means so. She had a strong resolute will, and a clever head of her own, though she was but a child. She had a way of her own too, and had it very completely. Perhaps because she was an only child, or perhaps because they were so easy-going, her parents spoiled her. She was, beyond question, the most tiresome little girl in that or any other neighbourhood. From her baby days her father and mother had taken every opportunity of showing her to their friends, and there was not a friend who did not dread the infliction. When the good lady visited her acquaintances, she always took Amelia with her, and if the acquaintances were fortunate enough to see from the windows who was coming, they used to snatch up any delicate knickknacks, or brittle ornaments lying about, and put them away, crying, "What is to be done? Here comes Amelia!"

When Amelia came in, she would stand and survey the room, whilst

her mother saluted her acquaintance; and if anything struck her fancy, she would interrupt the greetings to draw her mother's attention to it, with a twitch of her shawl, "Oh, look, mamma, at that funny bird in the glass case!" or perhaps, "Mamma, mamma! There's a new carpet since we were here last;" for, as her mother said, she was "a very observing child."

Then she would wander round the room, examining and fingering everything, and occasionally coming back with something in her hand to tread on her mother's dress, and break in upon the ladies' conversation with— "Mamma! mamma! What's the good of keeping this old basin? It's been broken and mended, and some of the pieces are quite loose now. I can feel them!" or—addressing the lady of the house—"That's not a real ottoman in the corner. It's a box covered with chintz. I know, for I've looked."

Then her mamma would say, reprovingly, "My *dear* Amelia!"

And perhaps the lady of the house would beg, "Don't play with that old china, my love; for though it is mended, it is very valuable;" and her mother would add, "My dear Amelia, you must not."

Sometimes the good lady said, "You *must* not." Sometimes she tried—"You must *not*." When both these failed, and Amelia was balancing the china bowl on her finger ends, her mamma would get flurried, and when Amelia flurried her, she always rolled her r's, and emphasized her words, so that it sounded thus:

"My dear-r-r-Ramelia! You MUST NOT."

At which Amelia would not so much as look round, till perhaps the bowl slipped from her fingers, and was smashed into unmendable fragments. Then her mamma would exclaim, "Oh, dear-r-r-r, oh dear-r-Ramelia!" and the lady of the house would try to look as if it did not matter, and when Amelia and her mother departed, would pick up the bits, and pour out her complaints to her lady friends, most of whom had suffered many such damages at the hands of this "very observing child."

When the good couple received their friends at home, there was no escaping from Amelia. If it was a dinner party, she came in with the dessert, or perhaps sooner. She would take up her position near some one, generally the person most deeply engaged in conversation, and either lean heavily against him or her, or climb on to his or her knee, without being invited. She would break in upon the most interesting discussion with her own little childish affairs, in the following style—

"I've been out to-day. I walked to the town. I jumped across three brooks. Can you jump? Papa gave me sixpence to-day. I am saving up my money to be rich. You may cut me an orange; no, I'll take it to Mr. Brown, he peels it with a spoon and turns the skin back. Mr. Brown! Mr. Brown! Don't talk to mamma, but peel me an orange, please. Mr. Brown! I'm playing with your finger-glass."

And when the finger-glass full of cold water had been upset on to Mr. Brown's shirt-front, Amelia's mamma would cry—"Oh dear, oh dear-r-Ramelia!" and carry her off with the ladies to the drawing-room.

Here she would scramble on to the ladies' knees, or trample out the gathers of their dresses, and fidget with their ornaments, startling some luckless lady by the announcement, "I've got your bracelet undone at last!" who would find one of the divisions broken open by force, Amelia not understanding the working of a clasp.

Or perhaps two young lady friends would get into a quiet corner for a chat. The observing child was sure to spy them, and run on to them, crushing their flowers and ribbons, and crying—"You two want to talk secrets, I know. I can hear what you say. I'm going to listen, I am. And I shall tell, too." When perhaps a knock at the door announced the nurse to take Miss Amelia to bed, and spread a general rapture of relief.

Then Amelia would run to trample and worry her mother, and after much teasing, and clinging, and complaining, the nurse would be dismissed, and the fond mamma would turn to the lady next to her, and say with a smile—"I suppose I must let her stay up a little. It is such a treat to her, poor child!"

But it was no treat to the visitors.

Besides tormenting her fellow-creatures, Amelia had a trick of teasing animals. She was really fond of dogs, but she was still fonder of doing what she was wanted not to do, and of worrying everything and everybody about her. So she used to tread on the tips of their tails, and pretend to give them biscuit, and then hit them on the nose, besides pulling at those few, long, sensitive hairs which thin-skinned dogs wear on the upper lip.

Now Amelia's mother's acquaintances were so very well-bred and amiable, that they never spoke their minds to either the mother or the daughter about what they endured from the latter's rudeness, wilful-

ness, and powers of destruction. But this was not the case with the dogs, and they expressed their sentiments by many a growl and snap. At last one day Amelia was tormenting a snow-white bulldog (who was certainly as well-bred and as amiable as any living creature in the kingdom), and she did not see that even his patience was becoming worn out. His pink nose became crimson with increased irritation, his upper lip twitched over his teeth, behind which he was rolling as many warning Rs as Amelia's mother herself. She finally held out a bun towards him, and just as he was about to take it, she snatched it away and kicked him instead. This fairly exasperated the bulldog, and as Amelia would not let him bite the bun, he bit Amelia's leg.

Her mamma was so distressed that she fell into hysterics, and hardly knew what she was saying. She said the bulldog must be shot for fear he should go mad, and Amelia's wound must be done with a red-hot poker for fear *she* should go mad (with hydrophobia). And as of course she couldn't bear the pain of this, she must have chloroform, and she would most probably die of that; for as one in several thousands dies annually under chloroform, it was evident that her chance of life was very small indeed. So, as the poor lady said, "Whether we shoot Amelia and burn the bulldog—at least I mean shoot the bulldog and burn Amelia with a red-hot poker—or leave it alone; and whether Amelia or the bulldog has chloroform or bears it without—it seems to be death or madness every way!"

And as the doctor did not come fast enough, she ran out without her bonnet to meet him, and Amelia's papa, who was very much distressed too, ran after her with her bonnet. Meanwhile the doctor came in by another way, and found Amelia sitting on the dining-room floor with the bulldog, and crying bitterly. She was telling him that they wanted to shoot him, but that they should not, for it was all her fault and not his. But she did not tell him that she was to be burnt with a red-hot poker, for she thought it might hurt his feelings. And then she wept afresh, and kissed the bulldog, and the bulldog kissed her with his red tongue, and rubbed his pink nose against her, and beat his own tail much harder on the floor than Amelia had ever hit it. She said the same things to the doctor, but she told him also that she was willing to be burnt without chloroform if it must be done, and if they would spare the bulldog. And though she looked very white, she meant what she said.

But the doctor looked at her leg, and found it was only a snap, and not a deep wound; and then he looked at the bulldog, and saw that so far from looking mad, he looked a great deal more sensible than anybody in the house. So he only washed Amelia's leg and bound it up, and she was not burnt with the poker, neither did she get hydrophobia; but she had got a good lesson on manners, and thenceforward she always behaved with the utmost propriety to animals, though she tormented her mother's friends as much as ever.

Now although Amelia's mamma's acquaintances were too polite to complain before her face, they made up for it by what they said behind her back. In allusion to the poor lady's ineffectual remonstrances, one gentleman said that the more mischief Amelia did, the dearer she seemed to grow to her mother. And somebody else replied that however dear she might be as a daughter, she was certainly a very *dear* friend, and proposed that they should send in a bill for all the damage she had done in the course of the year, as a round robin to her parents at Christmas. From which it may be seen that Amelia was not popular with her parents' friends, as (to do grown-up people justice) good children almost invariably are.

If she was not a favourite in the drawing-room, she was still less so in the nursery, where, besides all the hardships naturally belonging to attendance on a spoilt child, the poor nurse was kept, as she said, "on the continual go" by Amelia's reckless destruction of her clothes. It was not fair wear and tear, it was not an occasional fall in the mire, or an accidental rent or two during a game at "Hunt the Hare," but it was constant wilful destruction, which nurse had to repair as best she might. No entreaties would induce Amelia to "take care" of anything. She walked obstinately on the muddy side of the road when nurse pointed out the clean parts, kicking up the dirt with her feet; if she climbed a wall she never tried to free her dress if it had caught; on she rushed, and half a skirt might be left behind for any care she had in the matter. "They must be mended," or, "They must be washed," was all she thought about it.

"You seem to think things clean and mend themselves, Miss Amelia," said poor nurse one day.

"No, I don't," said Amelia, rudely. "I think you do them; what are you here for?"

But though she spoke in this insolent and unladylike fashion,

Amelia really did not realize what the tasks were which her carelessness imposed on other people. When every hour of nurse's day had been spent in struggling to keep her wilful young lady regularly fed, decently dressed, and moderately well-behaved (except, indeed, those hours when her mother was fighting the same battle downstairs); and when at last, after the hardest struggle of all, she had been got to bed not more than two hours later than her appointed time, even then there was no rest for nurse. Amelia's mamma could at last lean back in her chair and have a quiet chat with her husband, which was not broken in upon every two minutes, and Amelia herself was asleep; but nurse must sit up for hours wearing out her eyes by the light of a tallow candle, in fine-darning great, jagged, and most unnecessary holes in Amelia's muslin dresses. Or perhaps she had to wash and iron clothes for Amelia's wear next day. For sometimes she was so very destructive, that towards the end of the week she had used up all her clothes and had no clean ones to fall back upon.

Amelia's meals were another source of trouble. She would not wear a pinafore. If it had been put on, she would burst the strings, and perhaps in throwing it away knock her plate of mutton broth over the tablecloth and her own dress. Then she fancied first one thing and then another; she did not like this or that; she wanted a bit cut here or there. Her mamma used to begin by saying, "My dear-r-Ramelia, you must not be so wasteful," and she used to end by saying, "The dear child has positively no appetite;" which seemed to be a good reason for not wasting any more food upon her; but with Amelia's mamma it only meant that she might try a little cutlet and tomato sauce when she had half finished her roast beef, and that most of the cutlet and all the mashed potato might be exchanged for plum tart and custard; and that when she had spooned up the custard and played with the paste, and put the plum stones on the tablecloth, she might be tempted with a little stilton cheese and celery, and exchange that for anything that caught her fancy in the dessert dishes.

The nurse used to say, "Many a poor child would thank God for what you waste every meal time, Miss Amelia," and to quote a certain good old saying, "Waste not want not." But Amelia's mamma allowed her to send away on her plates what would have fed another child, day after day.


(To be continued.)

MAUDE'S DISCIPLINE.

"The trivial round, the common task
Would furnish all we ought to ask—
Room to deny ourselves; a road
To bring us daily nearer God."

CHRISTIAN YEAR.

PART I.

 MAUDE, I am going to send you to Westthorpe next week. Aunt Kate is so good as to say she will take you, and keep you till we are settled in our new home." Mrs. Trevillian sighed as she spoke, and rose from the breakfast table, gathering her letters in her hand. "It will be a nice thing for you," she added, receiving no answer to her information; "you will get acquainted with your cousins, and it will be a little preparation for you—a break, I mean, before going from this house to a much smaller one," and she sighed again.

Maude Trevillian, a tall, slim girl of about fourteen, rose from her chair and walked to the window. She was rather a striking-looking child, with smooth, glossy hair sitting close to a well-shaped head, large eyes of an intensely dark brown, and a singularly colourless complexion. She made no reply to her mother, but stood gazing out of the open window with a steady fixed look, across the low boundary wall which separated the carriage drive from the park, over the smooth green turf, where groups of deer were feeding, on to the distance, where a belt of plantations looked grey in the morning mist of early autumn. She stood there till her lip began to quiver, and her eyelids slowly drooped, and two large tears fell like the first drops before a storm.

Mrs. Trevillian was standing by the table, still occupied with her letters—too much so, indeed, to observe Maude's silence.

It was a large, handsome, oak-panelled room, hung round with family portraits, and the long table looked rather forlorn, with two solitary chairs—especially as the breakfast thereon, adorned with hothouse flowers and silver plate, would have amply served for a party of ten. An Isle of Skye terrier had chosen the spot where the sun-

beams fell thickest upon the Turkey carpet, and lay there on his side, a heap of dusty-looking fluff.

The letter Mrs. Trevillian was reading was from her husband. It ran thus: "As far as one can tell the place will do; it is small, of course—ugly, of course—and cheap, or it wouldn't suit us; but there is as much room as we want, and I suppose you can manage with a couple of maids at first; yet it is wretched work at fifty to begin the world again, and a miserable look-out for the children. John writes cheerfully, and hopes to be able to stick to his regiment. Poor little Frank went off in brave spirits, intending to make a fortune in New Zealand in a year. How does Maudie bear it all?" This last sentence recalled Mrs. Trevillian's thoughts to her daughter; she referred to another letter, and then said, "Here, Maude, you may take Aunt Kate's letter and read it; it is most kind."

"Thank you, mamma," replied Maude, without turning her head, "I had rather not."

"Well, my dear, do as you like; I must go now," and Mrs. Trevillian, still preoccupied, left the room.

Maude turned from the window, flung herself down on the floor, and burying her face in the dog's hot, rough coat, gave way to a torrent of tears.

Poor Maude! it was very hard, and I am afraid at the time she forgot that it was hard for others as well as herself.

In a small room, which opened by glass doors into a garden bright with flowers, sat four children. The eldest, a girl, was balancing herself on the edge of a rickety garden chair in the window, sometimes poring over a German grammar which lay in her lap, at others looking out into the garden and catching dreamily at a spray of clematis which drooped over the window, and swayed to and fro in the soft south wind. On the step at her feet a boy of eleven was busily engaged in rigging a boat, which was unmistakably of amateur construction, and a chubby, white-headed urchin of ten, and a pretty little girl of seven, were watching his proceedings with interest and admiration.

"Don't jog me, May; you'll spoil her," exclaimed the shipbuilder; "give me the rest of the string off the table, Fred; I believe I shall float her this afternoon now."

"Oh! Charlie, may I come with you?" cried May. "Aggie, will you ask mamma, and come with us? do—it will be so splendid!" and she clapped her hands and jumped for joy.

"What will be splendid?" asked Agnes, without looking up.

"Why, the boat: isn't she a beauty?" said May; "and she's to be called 'The Victory,' because he says he gained a victory over difficulties when he did her——"

"And hadn't got the timber," burst in Fred, more eagerly than grammatically.

"You've forgotten Maude," replied Agnes, shortly.

"Bother Maude!" said Fred.

"Oh, dear! I wish she wasn't coming," sighed May.

"Shut up!" said Charlie, decisively; "it's worse for her than us."

"I don't know that," said Fred, with a desponding shake of the head.

"May, dear, I am ready to hear you now," said a gentle voice at the door. "Freddy, it is past your time for going to papa." The children all rose up and looked brightly towards the speaker. She was a tall lady, with a pale, quiet face that looked as if it had made acquaintance with sorrow long ago; but there was a light in her eyes that was better than sunshine, and her smile was so sweet, it was no wonder the children smiled.

Little May ran to her at once; but Freddy, whose unpunctuality oppressed him, slipped past her, and ran off to the study with a very red face, and a not very perfect lesson.

Mrs. Wilmot walked up to her two elder children, took up Charlie's boat, and praised his perseverance.

"Mamma, do come down to the mere, and see her start," he said. "We mean to float her this afternoon, and Aggie can't, because of Maude," he added, in a lower tone.

Mrs. Wilmot smiled: she saw plainly that Maude was not welcome, and she was anxious not to impose too much upon the young ones at first.

"Well, Charlie," she said, "I was going to tell you to drive to the station and meet Maude; but if you want to go down to the mere, Freddy will be too proud to take charge of Punch, and he will not run away. Papa will walk down and then go on to the town, as there is something he has to do."

"I don't mind going a bit, mamma," said the boy, quickly.

"I am sure you don't, Charlie; but I think you had better go down to the mere and take the girls with you, and Freddy shall join you when he returns, and then the girls must come home."

"Thank you, mamma," said all the children; and, taking May's hand, Mrs. Wilmot left the room.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Agnes, as the door closed, "what shall we do with her?"

"Get on with her like a house on fire," replied Charlie.

"Oh! Charlie, you don't know her," cried his sister. "She is so grave, and so old, and so—so—so grand about things. She'll always be saying she doesn't care for this, and she hasn't been used to that, and making out that she is the most important person in the house, because her parents were once rich when we were poor. I was there twice, and she treated me as if she were grown up and I a child, and she's only a year older. She talks about society, and etiquette, and a lot of nonsense, and laughed at me for liking Robinson Crusoe.

"Well, but Aggie," was the reply, "you'll quarrel like cats if you set yourself against her in that way. There's a fellow at school—when he first came he made a donkey of himself, talking a lot of bosh, but he's one of the best fellows there now, and every one likes him; and Maude will be all right after a bit, if you don't worry her—girls worry so about nothing." Then, having put the finishing stroke to his boat, he bounded out of the open window, and ran off.

My readers may perhaps like to know a little of Maude Trevillian's family history.

Her father the year before she was born came into a property in one of the midland counties, which he inherited from an uncle. This uncle was unmarried, and having spent much on the turf, he left the estate somewhat encumbered; not heavily, however, and with a little care and economy it would soon have righted. But unfortunately neither Mr. Trevillian nor his wife—the daughter of a neighbouring peer—were accustomed to self-denial. Brought up in luxury, they did not know how to economize, and so debts accumulated until at length the crash came—the servants dismissed, the furniture sold, and the place let.

Mr. Trevillian had nothing to live on but three hundred pounds per annum of his wife's; and this to people of their tastes and habits was as

nothing. They had three children; the eldest son was in the army, the youngest was taken from Eton and sent to New Zealand, and Mrs. Trevillian was only too thankful to send her only girl for a time to her husband's sister, the wife of a clergyman in the north of England, whom she had scarcely noticed before, hoping that the simplicity of a country parsonage might counteract, at least in a measure, the exclusiveness and the expensive tastes which her previous education had fostered, and which her refined nature had only too readily adopted.

Freddy stood by Punch's head, tracing with his forefinger the white streak from his forehead to his nose, and kicking up the thick white dust in the station yard till his boots were no longer visible.

The train came in and went on, and Freddy began to whistle: his strain ceased abruptly, however, as his father appeared at the station door with a tall pale girl, whom we recognize as the same Maude we saw in the breakfast-room a few days ago. She was not crying now—she looked as if she never had cried, would cry, or could cry. She looked so very tall for fourteen, Freddy began to feel very small and rather shy.

"Here, Freddy," said his father, "here's cousin Maude: mind you take care of her, and don't drive into the ditch." He put his niece carefully into the small vehicle as he spoke, and bidding Freddy jump up, and telling her she would find Aunt Kate all ready for her, he nodded and walked away. At the same moment Punch moved on.

Freddy drove out of the station yard in silence, and on reaching the road Punch assumed a steady trot, and Maude spoke. "What is your name?" she said.

"Frederick," he answered, stoutly; "and my brother's name is Charles, and my eldest sister's Agnes, and the little one's Mary, and we call her May."

Maude made no answer, and Freddy tried again.

"Doesn't Punch trot well?" he said.

"Is Punch your pony?"

"It is papa's. This is a jolly carriage: we haven't had it long. Do you like driving?"

"I used to like it at home, but I always drove a pair of ponies," replied his cousin.

Freddy did not hazard another word till they reached the village,

and then raising his whip, he said, "That's the church—the church-yard joins our garden, and we see the church from 'the windows quite plain," and then narrowly shaving the gate post, Punch walked slowly up the short shady drive and stopped of his own accord at his master's door.

On the threshold stood Mrs. Wilmot, all smiles and kindness. "Well, dear Maudie, so here you are at last—tired, I'm sure, and hungry, I hope, for dinner is almost ready." This was her welcome, and the warm motherly kiss almost thawed Maude's frozen heart.

It was better than she anticipated, and when she joined the others half an hour later in the sunny dining-room, she never thought that the carpet was old and the curtains faded. She looked at the sweet summer flowers so tastefully arranged on the table, and at the happy faces gathered round it, and thought how different it would all be if such peace and comfort were in her own family.

Agnes was quiet and kind, Charlie full of fun, and little May quite ready to be friends; Freddy was a little subdued—he had not quite got over the "pair of ponies."

Several days passed pleasantly by, and Maude was getting more and more reconciled to her new life. Not that she was happy: on the contrary, as her great grievance began to subside, a host of little grievances rose up and took its place. Agnes was dictatorial, Charlie untidy, Freddy rude, and May tiresome and inquisitive, her uncle particular, and her aunt—well, no, there was not much to be said against "Aunt Kate," only she *would* treat her as if she had known her all her life. These complaints were poured out in long letters to her brother John, for Frank, who had hitherto shared all her joys and sorrows, was on his way to New Zealand, and no tidings were likely to be heard of him for some time to come.

"Martha," said Mr. Wilmot, bustling into the dining-room one morning at half-past eight; "you are always late with breakfast now, how is it?"

"Well, sir," said Martha, in rather an injured tone, "I haven't left Miss Trevillian five minutes."

"Haven't left what?" said the rector, turning round.

"Miss Trevillian, sir; I always do her hair, and that. I haven't had my breakfast yet, sir," and Martha left the room to tell the cook that master had been calling out for his breakfast, and if she was him she

wouldn't stand it. Miss Trevillian need have brought a nurse with her, for she couldn't dress herself no more than a baby.

"Maude, dear," said Mrs. Wilmot, gently, as they sat at work together in the drawing-room, "don't you think you could manage to do a little more for yourself in the morning? Martha has hardly time to spare."

"I have always had a maid at home," said Maude, abruptly.

"Yes, dear, but you know things are not as they were; and don't you think it is good for you to accustom yourself to what you must do when you go home?"

"I shall never go home again," muttered Maude.

"Maude," replied her aunt, quietly, "don't think I want to preach you a sermon; but home is wherever those live who are nearest and dearest to us, or wherever it pleases God to place us."

Maude made no answer, and Mrs. Wilmot continued: "With regard to what I was speaking of, I cannot let you have Martha to dress you; all you can do for yourself you must, and if there is anything you cannot do, call Agnes; she is next door to you, and I think you will find her more handy than Martha."

"But my hair?" said Maude, doubtfully.

Mrs. Wilmot glanced at her niece's classical braids. "You must have some talent for hairdressing, my dear," she said, smiling, "to have taught it so successfully to Martha: I advise you to do it yourself."

"But I shall be so untidy," pleaded Maude.

"At first, perhaps; but we will all make allowances, and the untidy stage will not last long with you, I am sure." Maude was silent: for the first time she thought her aunt was treating her cruelly.

The days of September were drawing to a close. Charlie had gone back to school, and Agnes was working hard under a daily governess.

(To be continued.)

OLD-FASHIONED FAIRY TALES.

II.—THE COBBLER AND THE GHOSTS.



ONCE upon a time there was a cobbler who had very poor wits, but by strict industry he could earn enough to keep himself and his widowed mother in comfort.

In this manner he had lived for many years in peace and prosperity, when a distant relative died who left him a certain sum of money.




AMELIA AND THE DWARFS.

AMELIA AND THE DWARFS.

By the Author of "Mrs. Overthway's Remembrances."

UNDER THE HAYCOCKS.

T was summer, and haytime. Amelia had been constantly in the hayfield, and the haymakers had constantly wished that she had been anywhere else. She mislaid the rakes, nearly killed herself and several other persons with a fork, and overturned one haycock after another as fast as they were made. At tea time it was hoped that she would depart, but she teased her mamma to have the tea brought into the field, and her mamma said, "The poor child must have a treat sometimes," and so it was brought out.

After this she fell off the haycart, and was a good deal shaken, but not hurt. So she was taken indoors, and the haymakers worked hard and cleared the field, all but a few cocks which were left till the morning.

The sun set, the dew fell, the moon rose. It was a lovely night. Amelia peeped from behind the blinds of the drawing-room windows, and saw four haycocks, each with a deep shadow reposing at its side. The rest of the field was swept clean, and looked pale in the moonshine. It was a lovely night.

"I want to go out," said Amelia. "They will take away those cocks before I can get at them in the morning, and there will be no more jumping and tumbling. I shall go out and have some fun now."

"My dear Amelia, you must not," said her mamma; and her papa added, "I won't hear of it." So Amelia went upstairs to grumble to nurse; but nurse only said, "Now, my dear Miss Amelia, do go quietly to bed, like a dear love. The field is all wet with dew. Besides, it's a moonlight night, and who knows what's abroad? You might see the fairies—bless us and sain us!—and what not. There's been a magpie hopping up and down near the house all day, and that's a sign of ill luck."

"I don't care for magpies," said Amelia; "I threw a stone at that one to-day."

And she left the nursery, and swung downstairs on the rail of the

banisters. But she did not go into the drawing-room; she opened the front door and went out into the moonshine.

It was a lovely night. But there was something strange about it. Everything looked asleep, and yet seemed not only awake but watching. There was not a sound, and yet the air seemed full of half sounds. The child was quite alone, and yet at every step she fancied some one behind her, on one side of her, somewhere, and found it only a rustling leaf, or a passing shadow. She was soon in the hayfield, where it was just the same; so that when she fancied that something green was moving near the first haycock she thought very little of it, till, coming closer, she plainly perceived by the moonlight a tiny man dressed in green, with a tall, pointed hat, and very, very long tips to his shoes, tying his shoestring with his foot on a stubble stalk. He had the most wizened of faces, and when he got angry with his shoe, he pulled so wry a grimace that it was quite laughable. At last he stood up, stepping carefully over the stubble, went up to the first haycock, and drawing out a hollow grass stalk blew upon it till his cheeks were puffed like footballs. And yet there was no sound, only a half sound, as of a horn blown in the far distance, or in a dream. Presently the point of a tall hat, and finally just such another little wizened face poked out through the side of the haycock.

"Can we hold revel here to-night?" asked the little green man.

"That indeed you cannot," answered the other; "we have hardly room to turn round as it is, with all Amelia's dirty frocks."

"Ah, bah!" said the dwarf; and he walked on to the next haycock, Amelia cautiously following.

Here he blew again, and a head was put out as before, on which he said—

"Can we hold revel here to-night?"

"How is it possible?" was the reply, "when there is not a place where one can so much as set down an acorn cup, for Amelia's broken victuals."

"Fie! fie!" said the dwarf, and went on to the third, where all happened as before; and he asked the old question—

"Can we hold revel here to-night?"

"Can you dance on glass and crockery sherds?" inquired the other. "Amelia's broken gimcracks are everywhere."

"Pshaw!" snorted the dwarf, frowning terribly; and when he came

to the fourth haycock he blew such an angry blast that the grass stalk split into seven pieces. But he met with no better success than before. Only the point of a hat came through the hay, and a feeble voice piped in tones of depression—"The broken threads would entangle our feet. It's all Amelia's fault. If we could only get hold of her!"

"If she's wise, she'll keep as far from these haycocks as she can," snarled the dwarf, angrily; and he shook his fist, as much as to say, "If she did come, I should not receive her very pleasantly."

Now with Amelia, to hear that she had better not do something, was to make her wish at once to do it; and as she was not at all wanting in courage, she pulled the dwarf's little cloak, just as she would have twitched her mother's shawl, and said (with that sort of snarly whine in which spoilt children generally speak)—"Why shouldn't I come to the haycocks if I want to? They belong to my papa, and I shall come if I like. But you have no business here."

"Nightshade and hemlock!" ejaculated the little man, "you are not lacking in impudence. Perhaps your Sauciness is not quite aware how things are distributed in this world?" saying which he lifted his pointed shoes and began to dance and sing—

"All under the sun belongs to men,
And all under the moon to the fairies.
So, so, so! Ho, ho, ho!
All under the moon to the fairies."

As he sang "Ho, ho, ho!" the little man turned head over heels; and though by this time Amelia would gladly have got away, she could not, for the dwarf seemed to dance and tumble round her, and always to cut off the chance of escape; whilst numberless voices from all around seemed to join in the chorus, with

"So, so, so! Ho, ho, ho!
All under the moon to the fairies."

"And now," said the little man, "to work! And you have plenty of work before you, so trip on, to the first haycock."

"I shan't!" said Amelia.

"On with you!" repeated the dwarf.

"I won't!" said Amelia.

But the little man, who was behind her, pinched her funny-bone

with his lean fingers, and, as everybody knows, that is agony; so Amelia ran on, and tried to get away. But when she went too fast, the dwarf trod on her heels with his long-pointed shoe, and if she did not go fast enough, he pinched her funny-bone. So for once in her life she was obliged to do as she was told. As they ran, tall hats and wizened faces were popped out on all sides of the haycocks, like blanched almonds on a tipsy cake; and whenever the dwarf pinched Amelia, or trod on her heels, they cried "Ho, ho, ho!" with such horrible contortions as they laughed, that it was hideous to behold.

"Here is Amelia!" shouted the dwarf when they reached the first haycock.

"Ho, ho, ho!" laughed all the others, as they poked out here and there from the hay.

"Bring a stock," said the dwarf: on which the hay was lifted, and out ran six or seven dwarfs, carrying what seemed to Amelia to be a little girl like herself. And when she looked closer, to her horror and surprise the figure was exactly like her—it was her own face, clothes, and everything.

"Shall we kick it into the house?" asked the goblins.

"No," said the dwarf; "lay it down by the haycock. The father and mother are coming to seek her now."

When Amelia heard this she began to shriek for help; but she was pushed into the haycock, where her loudest cries sounded like the chirruping of a grasshopper.

It was really a fine sight to see the inside of the cock.

Farmers do not like to see flowers in a hayfield, but the fairies do. They had arranged all the buttercups, &c. in patterns on the haywalls; bunches of meadowsweet swung from the roof like censers, and perfumed the air; and the oxeye daisies which formed the ceiling gave a light like stars. But Amelia cared for none of this. She only struggled to peep through the hay, and she did see her father and mother and nurse come down the lawn, followed by the other servants, looking for her. When they saw the stock they ran to raise it with exclamations of pity and surprise. The stock moaned faintly, and Amelia's mamma wept, and Amelia herself shouted with all her might.

"What's that?" said her mamma. (It is not easy to deceive a mother.)

"Only the grasshoppers, my dear," said papa. "Let us get the poor child home."

The stock moaned again, and the mother said, "Oh dear! oh dear-r-Ramelia!" and followed in tears.

"Rub her eyes," said the dwarf; on which Amelia's eyes were rubbed with some ointment, and when she took a last peep, she could see that the stock was nothing but a hairy imp, with a face like the oldest and most grotesque of apes.

"—— and send her below;" added the dwarf. On which the field opened, and Amelia was pushed underground.

She found herself on a sort of open heath, where no houses were to be seen. Of course there was no moonshine, and yet it was neither daylight nor dark. There was as the light of early dawn, and every sound was at once clear and dreamy, like the first sounds of the day coming through the fresh air before sunrise. Beautiful flowers crept over the heath, whose tints were constantly changing in the subdued light; and as the hues changed and blended, the flowers gave forth different perfumes. All would have been charming but that at every few paces the paths were blocked by large clothes-baskets full of dirty frocks. And the frocks were Amelia's. Torn, dragged, wet, covered with sand, mud, and dirt of all kinds, Amelia recognized them.

"You've got to wash them all," said the dwarf, who was behind her as usual; "that's what you've come down for—not because your society is particularly pleasant. So the sooner you begin the better."

"I can't," said Amelia (she had already learnt that "I won't" is not an answer for every one); "send them up to nurse, and she'll do them. It is her business."

"What nurse can do she has done, and now it's time for you to begin," said the dwarf. "Sooner or later the mischief done by spoilt children's wilful disobedience comes back on their own hands. Up to a certain point we help them, for we love children, and we are wilful ourselves. But there are limits to everything. If you can't wash your dirty frocks, it is time you learnt to do so, if only that you may know what the trouble is you impose on other people. *She* will teach you."

The dwarf kicked out his foot in front of him, and pointed with his long toe to a woman who sat by a fire made upon the heath, where a

pot was suspended from crossed poles. It was like a bit of a gipsy encampment, and the woman seemed to be a real woman, not a fairy—which was the case, as Amelia afterwards found. She had lived underground for many years, and was the dwarfs' servant.

And this was how it came about that Amelia had to wash her dirty frocks. Let any little girl try to wash one of her dresses; not to half wash it, not to leave it stained with dirty water, but to wash it quite clean. Let her then try to starch and iron it—in short, to make it look as if it had come from the laundress—and she will have some idea of what poor Amelia had to learn to do. There was no help for it. When she was working she very seldom saw the dwarfs; but if she were idle or stubborn, or had any hopes of getting away, one was sure to start up at her elbow and pinch her funny-bone, or poke her in the ribs, till she did her best. Her back ached with stooping over the wash-tub; her hands and arms grew wrinkled with soaking in hot soapsuds, and sore with rubbing. Whatever she did not know how to do, the woman of the heath taught her. At first, whilst Amelia was sulky, the woman of the heath was sharp and cross; but when Amelia became willing and obedient, she was good-natured, and even helped her.

The first time that Amelia felt hungry she asked for some food.

"By all means," said one of the dwarfs; "there is plenty down here which belongs to you;" and he led her away till they came to a place like the first, except that it was covered with plates of broken meats; all the bits of good meat, pie, pudding, bread and butter, &c., that Amelia had wasted beforetime.

"I can't eat cold scraps like these," said Amelia, turning away.

"Then what did you ask for food for before you were hungry?" screamed the dwarf, and he pinched her and sent her about her business.

After a while she became so famished that she was glad to beg humbly to be allowed to go for food; and she ate a cold chop and the remains of a rice pudding with thankfulness. How delicious they tasted! She was surprised herself at the good things she had rejected. After a time she fancied she would like to warm up some of the cold meat in a pan, which the woman of the heath used to cook her own dinner in, and she asked for leave to do so.

"You may do anything you like to make yourself comfortable, if

you do it yourself," said she; and Amelia, who had been watching her for many times, became quite expert in cooking up the scraps.

As there was no real daylight underground, so also there was no night. When the old woman was tired she lay down and had a nap, and when she thought that Amelia had earned a rest, she allowed her to do the same. It was never cold, and it never rained, so they slept on the heath among the flowers.

They say that "It's a long lane that has no turning," and the hardest tasks come to an end some time, and Amelia's dresses were clean at last; but then a more wearisome work was before her. They had to be mended. Amelia looked at the jagged rents made by the hedges; the great gaping holes in front where she had put her foot through; the torn tucks and gathers. First she wept, then she bitterly regretted that she had so often refused to do her sewing at home that she was very awkward with her needle. Whether she ever would have got through this task is doubtful; but she had by this time become so well-behaved and willing that the old woman was kind to her, and, pitying her blundering attempts, she helped her a great deal; whilst Amelia would cook the old woman's victuals, or repeat stories and pieces of poetry to amuse her.

"How glad I am that I ever learnt anything!" thought the poor child; "everything one learns seems to come in useful some time."

At last the dresses were finished.

"Do you think I shall be allowed to go home now?" Amelia asked of the woman of the heath.

"Not yet," said she; "you have got to mend the broken gimcracks next."

"But when I have done all my tasks," Amelia said; "will they let me go then?"

"That depends," said the woman, and she sat silent over the fire; but Amelia wept so bitterly, that she pitied her and said—"Only dry your eyes, for the fairies hate tears, and I will tell you all I know and do the best for you I can. You see, when you first came you were—excuse me!—such an unlicked cub; such a peevish, selfish, wilful, useless, and ill-mannered little miss, that neither the fairies nor anybody else were likely to keep you any longer than necessary. But now you are such a willing, handy, and civil little thing, and so pretty and graceful withal, that I think it is very likely that they will want

to keep you altogether. I think you had better make up your mind to it. They are kindly little folk, and will make a pet of you in the end."

"Oh, no! no!" moaned poor Amelia; "I want to be with my mother, my poor dear mother! I want to make up for being a bad child so long. Besides, surely that 'stock,' as they called her, will want to come back to her own people."

"As to that," said the woman, "after a time the stock will affect mortal illness, and will then take possession of the first black cat she sees, and in that shape leave the house, and come home. But the figure that is like you will remain lifeless in the bed, and will be duly buried. Then your people, believing you to be dead, will never look for you, and you will always remain here. However, as this distresses you so, I will give you some advice. Can you dance?"

"Yes," said Amelia; "I did attend pretty well to my dancing lessons. I was considered rather clever about it."

"At any spare moments you find," continued the woman, "dance, dance all your dances, and as well as you can. The dwarfs love dancing."

"And then?" said Amelia.

"Then, perhaps some night they will take you up to dance with them in the meadows above ground."

"But I could not get away. They would tread on my heels—oh! I could never escape them."

"I know that," said the woman; "your only chance is this. If ever, when dancing in the meadows, you can find a four-leaved clover, hold it in your hand and wish to be at home. Then no one can stop you. Meanwhile I advise you to seem happy, that they may think you are content, and have forgotten the world. And dance, above all, dance!"

And Amelia, not to be behindhand, began then and there to dance some pretty figures on the heath. As she was dancing the dwarf came by.

"Ho, ho!" said he, "you can dance, can you?"

"When I am happy, I can," said Amelia, performing several graceful movements as she spoke.

"What are you pleased about now?" snapped the dwarf, suspiciously.

"Have I not reason?" said Amelia. "The dresses are washed and mended."

"Then up with them!" returned the dwarf. On which half a dozen elves popped the whole lot into a big basket and kicked them up into the world, where they found their way to the right wardrobes somehow.

As the woman of the heath had said, Amelia was soon set to a new task. When she bade the old woman farewell, she asked if she could do nothing for her if ever she got at liberty herself.

"Can I do nothing to get you back to your old home?" Amelia cried, for she thought of others now as well as herself.

"No, thank you," returned the old woman; "I am used to this, and do not care to return. I have been here a long time—how long I do not know; for as there is neither daylight nor dark we have no measure of time—long, I am sure, very long. The light and noise up yonder would now be too much for me. But I wish you well, and, above all, remember to dance!"

The new scene of Amelia's labours was a more rocky part of the heath, where grey granite boulders served for seats and tables, and sometimes for workshops and anvils, as in one place, where a grotesque and grimy old dwarf sat forging rivets to mend china and glass. A fire in a hollow of the boulder served for a forge, and on the flatter part was his anvil. The rocks were covered in all directions with the knick-knacks, ornaments, &c., that Amelia had at various times destroyed.

"If you please, sir," she said to the dwarf, "I am Amelia."

The dwarf left off blowing at his forge and looked at her.

"Then I wonder you're not ashamed of yourself," said he.

"I am ashamed of myself," said poor Amelia, "very much ashamed. I should like to mend these things if I can."

"Well, you can't say more than that," said the dwarf, in a mollified tone, for he was a kindly little creature; "bring that china bowl here, and I'll show you how to set to work."

Poor Amelia did not get on very fast, but she tried her best. As to the dwarf, it was truly wonderful to see how he worked. Things seemed to mend themselves at his touch, and he was so proud of his skill, and so particular, that he generally did over again the things which Amelia had done after her fashion. The first time he gave her a few minutes in which to rest and amuse herself she held out her little skirt, and began one of her prettiest dances.

"Rivets and trivets!" shrieked the little man, "How you dance!

It is charming! I say it is charming! On with you! Fa, la fa! La, fa la! It gives me the fidgets in my shoe points to see you!" and forthwith down he jumped, and began capering about.

"I am a good dancer myself," said the little man. "Do you know the 'Hop, Skip, and a Jump' dance?"

"I do not think I do," said Amelia.

"It is much admired," said the dwarf, "when I dance it;" and he thereupon tucked up the little leathern apron in which he worked and performed some curious antics on one leg.

"That is the Hop," he observed, pausing for a moment. The Skip is thus. You throw out your left leg as high and as far you can, and as you drop on the toe of your left foot you fling out the right leg in the same manner, and so on. This is the Jump," with which he turned a somersault and disappeared from view. When Amelia next saw him he was sitting cross-legged on his boulder.

"Good, wasn't it?" he said.

"Wonderful!" Amelia replied.

"Now it's your turn again," said the dwarf.

But Amelia cunningly replied—"I'm afraid I must go on with my work."

"Pshaw!" said the little tinker. "Give me your work. I can do more in a minute than you in a month, and better to boot. Now dance again."

"Do you know this?" said Amelia, and she danced a few paces of a polka mazurka.

"Admirable!" cried the little man. "Stay"—and he drew an old violin from behind the rock; "now dance again, and mark the time well, so that I may catch the measure, and then I will accompany you."

Which accordingly he did, improvising a very spirited tune, which had, however, the peculiar subdued and weird effect of all the other sounds in this strange region.

"The fiddle came from up yonder," said the little man. "It was smashed to atoms in the world and thrown away. But, ho, ho, ho! There is nothing that I cannot mend, and a mended fiddle is an amended fiddle. It improves the tone. Now teach me that dance, and I will patch up all the rest of the gimcracks. Is it a bargain?"

"By all means," said Amelia; and she began to explain the dance to the best of her ability.

"Charming, charming!" cried the dwarf. "We have no such dance ourselves. We only dance hand in hand, and round and round, when we dance together. Now I will learn the step, and then I will put my arm round your waist and dance with you."

Amelia looked at the dwarf. He was very smutty, and old, and weazened. Truly, a queer partner! But "handsome is that handsome does;" and he had done her a good turn. So when he had learnt the step, he put his arm round Amelia's waist, and they danced together. His shoe points were very much in the way, but otherwise he danced very well.

Then he set to work on the broken ornaments, and they were all very soon "as good as new." But they were not kicked up into the world, for, as the dwarfs said, they would be sure to break on the road. So they kept them and used them; and I fear that no benefit came from the little tinker's skill to Amelia's mamma's acquaintance in this matter.

"Have I any other tasks?" Amelia inquired.

"One more," said the dwarfs; and she was led farther on to a smooth mossy green, thickly covered with what looked like bits of broken thread. One would think it had been a milliner's work-room from the first invention of needles and threads.

"What are these?" Amelia asked.

"They are the broken threads of all the conversations you have interrupted," was the reply; "and pretty dangerous work it is to dance here now, with threads getting round one's shoe points. Dance a hornpipe in a herring-net, and you'll know what it is!"

Amelia began to pick up the threads, but it was tedious work. She had cleared a yard or two, and her back was aching terribly, when she heard the fiddle and the mazurka behind her; and looking round she saw the old dwarf, who was playing away, and making the most hideous grimaces as his chin pressed the violin.

"Dance, my lady, dance!" he shouted.

"I do not think I can," said Amelia; "I am so weary with stooping over my work."

"Then rest a few minutes," he answered, "and I will play you a jig. A jig is a beautiful dance, such life, such spirit! So!"

And he played faster and faster, his arm, his face, his fiddle-bow all seemed working together; and as he played, the threads danced themselves into three heaps.

"That is not bad, is it?" said the dwarf; "and now for our own dance," and he played the mazurka. "Get the measure well into your head. Lâ, la fâ lâ! Lâ, la fâ lâ! So!"

And throwing away his fiddle, he caught Amelia round the waist, and they danced as before. After which, she had no difficulty in putting the three heaps of thread into a basket.

"Where are these to be kicked to?" asked the young goblins.

"To the four winds of heaven," said the old dwarf. "There are very few drawing-room conversations worth putting together a second time. They are not like old china bowls."

BY MOONLIGHT.

Thus Amelia's tasks were ended; but not a word was said of her return home. The dwarfs were now very kind, and made so much of her that it was evident that they meant her to remain with them. Amelia often cooked for them, and she danced and played with them, and never showed a sign of discontent; but her heart ached for home, and when she was alone she would bury her face in the flowers and cry for her mother.

One day she overheard the dwarfs in consultation.

"The moon is full to-morrow," said one—"Then I have been a month down here," thought Amelia; "it was full moon that night"—"shall we dance in the Mary Meads?"

"By all means," said the old tinker dwarf; "and we will take Amelia, and dance my dance."

"Is it safe?" said another.

"Look how content she is," said the old dwarf; "and, oh! how she dances; my feet tickle at the bare thought."

"The ordinary run of mortals do not see us," continued the objector; "but she is visible to any one. And there are men and women who wander in the moonlight, and the Mary Meads are near her old home."

"I will make her a hat of touchwood," said the old dwarf, "so that even if she is seen it will look like a will-o'-the-wisp bobbing up and down. If she does not come, I will not. I must dance my dance. You do not know what it is! We two alone move together with a grace which even here is remarkable. But when I think that up yonder we shall have attendant shadows echoing our movements, I long for the moment to arrive."

"So be it," said the others; and Amelia wore the touchwood hat, and went up with them to the Mary Meads.

Amelia and the dwarf danced the mazurka, and their shadows, now as short as themselves, then long and gigantic, danced beside them. As the moon went down, and the shadows lengthened, the dwarf was in raptures.

"When one sees how colossal one's very shadow is," he remarked, "one knows one's true worth. You also have a good shadow. We are partners in the dance, and I think we will be partners for life. But I have not fully considered the matter, so this is not to be regarded as a formal proposal." And he continued to dance, singing, "Lâ, la fâ lâ, lâ, la fâ lâ." It was highly admired.

The Mary Meads lay a little below the house where Amelia's parents lived, and once during the night her father, who was watching by the sick bed of the stock, looked out of the window.

"How lovely the moonlight is!" he murmured; "but, dear me! there is a will-o'-the-wisp yonder. I had no idea the Mary Meads were so damp." Then he pulled the blind down and went back into the room.

As for poor Amelia, she found no four-leaved clover, and at cock-crow they all went underground.

"We will dance on Hunch Hill to-morrow," said the dwarfs.

All went as before; not a clover plant of any kind did Amelia see, and at cockcrow the revel broke up.

On the following night they danced in the hayfield. The old stubble was now almost hidden by green clover. There was a grand fairy dance—a round dance, which does not mean, as with us, a dance for two partners, but a dance where all join hands and dance round and round in a circle with appropriate antics. Round they went, faster and faster, the pointed shoes now meeting in the centre like the spokes of a wheel, now kicked out behind like spikes, and then scamper, caper, hurry! They seemed to fly, when suddenly the ring broke at one corner, and nothing being stronger than its weakest point, the whole circle were sent flying over the field.

"Ho, ho, ho!" laughed the dwarfs, for they are good-humoured little folk, and do not mind a tumble.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Amelia, for she had fallen with her fingers on a four-leaved clover.

She put it behind her back, for the old tinker dwarf was coming up to her, wiping the mud from his face with his leathern apron.

"Now for our dance!" he shrieked. "And I have made up my mind—partners now and partners always. You are incomparable. For three hundred years I have not met with your equal."

But Amelia held the four-leaved clover above her head, and cried from her very heart—"I want to go home!"

The dwarf gave a hideous yell of disappointment, and at this instant the stock came tumbling head over heels into the midst, crying—"Oh! the pills, the powders, and the draughts! oh, the lotions and embrocations! oh, the blisters, the poultices, and the plasters! men may well be so short-lived!"

And Amelia found herself in bed in her own home.

AT HOME AGAIN.

By the side of Amelia's bed stood a little table, on which were so many big bottles of medicine, that Amelia smiled to think of all the stock must have had to swallow during the month past. There was an open Bible on 'it too, in which Amelia's mother was reading, whilst tears trickled slowly down her pale cheeks. The poor lady looked so thin and ill, so worn with sorrow and watching, that Amelia's heart smote her, as if some one had given her a sharp blow.

"Mamma, mamma! Mother, my dear, dear mother!"

The tender, humble, loving tone of voice was so unlike Amelia's old imperious snarl, that her mother hardly recognised it; and when she saw Amelia's eyes full of intelligence instead of the delirium of fever, and that (though older and thinner and rather pale) she looked wonderfully well, the poor worn-out lady could hardly restrain herself from falling into hysterics for very joy.

"Dear mamma, I want to tell you all about it," said Amelia, kissing the kind hand that stroked her brow.

But it appeared that the doctor had forbidden conversation; and though Amelia knew it would do her no harm, she yielded to her mother's wish and lay still and silent.

"Now, my love, it is time to take your medicine."

But Amelia pleaded—"Oh, mamma, indeed I don't want any medicine. I am quite well, and would like to get up."

"Ah, my dear child!" cried her mother, "what I have suffered in

inducing you to take your medicine, and yet see what good it has done you."

"I hope you will never suffer any more from my wilfulness," said Amelia; and she swallowed two table-spoonsful of a mixture labelled "To be well shaken before taken" without even a wry face.

Presently the doctor came.

"You're not so very angry at the sight of me to-day, my little lady, eh?" he said.

"I have not seen you for a long time," said Amelia; "but I know you have been here, attending a stock who looked like me. If your eyes had been touched with fairy ointment, however, you would have been aware that it was a fairy imp, and a very ugly one, covered with hair. I have been living in terror lest it should go back underground in the shape of a black cat. However, thanks to the four-leaved clover, and the old woman of the heath, I am at home again."

On hearing this rhodomontade, Amelia's mother burst into tears, for she thought the poor child was still raving with fever. But the doctor smiled pleasantly, and said—"Ay, ay, to be sure," with a little nod, as one should say, "We know all about it;" and laid two fingers in a casual manner on Amelia's wrist.

"But she is wonderfully better, madam," he said afterwards to her mamma; "the brain has been severely tried, but she is marvellously improved: in fact, it is an effort of nature, a most favourable effort, and we can but assist the rally; we will change the medicine." Which he did, and very wisely assisted nature with a bottle of pure water flavoured with tincture of roses.

"And it was so very kind of him to give me his directions in poetry," said Amelia's mamma; "for I told him my memory, which is never good, seemed going completely, from anxiety, and if I had done anything wrong just now, I should never have forgiven myself. And I always found poetry easier to remember than prose,"—which puzzled everybody, the doctor included, till it appeared that she had ingeniously discovered a rhyme in his orders

"To be kept cool and quiet,
With light nourishing diet."

Under which treatment Amelia was soon pronounced to be well.

She made another attempt to relate her adventures, but she found that not even nurse would believe in them.

"Why you told me yourself I might meet with the fairies," said Amelia, reproachfully.

"So I did, my dear," nurse replied, "and they say that it's that put it into your head. And I'm sure what you say about the dwarfs and all is as good as a printed book, though you can't think that ever I would have let any dirty clothes store up like that, let alone your frocks, my dear. But for pity sake, Miss Amelia, don't go on about it to your mother, for she thinks you'll never get your senses right again, and she has fretted enough about you, poor lady; and nursed you night and day till she is nigh worn out. And anybody can see you've been ill, miss, you've grown so, and look paler and older like. Well, to be sure, as you say, if you'd been washing and working for a month in a place without a bit of sun, or a bed to lie on, and scraps to eat, it would be enough to do it; and many's the poor child that has to, and gets worn and old before her time. But, my dear, whatever you think, give in to your mother; you'll never repent giving in to your mother, my dear, the longest day you live."

So Amelia kept her own counsel. But she had one confidant.

When her parents brought the stock home on the night of Amelia's visit to the haycocks, the bull-dog's conduct had been most strange. His usual good-humour appeared to have been exchanged for incomprehensible fury, and he was with difficulty prevented from flying at the stock, who on her part showed an anger and dislike fully equal to his.

Finally the bull-dog had been confined to the stable, where he remained the whole month, uttering from time to time such howls, with his snub nose in the air, that poor nurse quite gave up hope of Amelia's recovery.

"For indeed, my dear, they do say that a howling dog is a sign of death, and it was more than I could abear."

But the day after Amelia's return, as nurse was leaving the room with a tray which had carried some of the light nourishing diet ordered by the doctor, she was knocked down, tray and all, by the bull-dog, who came tearing into the room, dragging a chain and dirty rope after him, and nearly choked by the desperate efforts which had finally effected his escape from the stable. And he jumped straight on to the end of Amelia's bed, where he lay, *thudding* with his tail, and giving short whines of ecstasy. And as Amelia begged that he

might be left, and as it was evident that he would bite any one who tried to take him away, he became established as chief nurse. When Amelia's meals were brought to the bedside on a tray, he kept a fixed eye on the plates, as if to see if her appetite were improving. And he would even take a snack himself, with an air of great affability.

And when Amelia told him her story, she could see by his eyes, and his nose, and his ears, and his tail, and the way he growled whenever the stock was mentioned, that he knew all about it. As, on the other hand, he had no difficulty in conveying to her by sympathetic whines the sentiment "Of course I would have helped you if I could; but they tied me up, and this disgusting old rope has taken me a month to worry through."

So, in spite of the past, Amelia grew up good and gentle, unselfish and considerate for others. She was unusually clever, as those who have been with the "Little People" are said always to be.

And she became so popular with her mother's acquaintances that they said—"We will no longer call her Amelia, for it is a name we learnt to dislike, but we will call her Amy, that is to say, 'Beloved.'"


* * * * *

"And did my godmother's grandmother believe that Amelia had really been with the fairies, or did she think it was all fever ravings?"

"That, indeed, she never said, but she always observed that it was a pleasant tale with a good moral, which was surely enough for anybody."

J. H. E.

"THE CITY OF THE SULTANS."

HEN history connects itself with great cities, which have survived all changes and attacks of man and time—which contain monuments of former greatness, or goodness, or wickedness—I think we are generally inclined to attach more importance to its stories—our interest is more awakened to the truth and reality of what we hear. For instance, there is a great controversy going on among very learned men, which would probably be set quite at rest by the discovery of the ruins of a certain town known as Troy; and because they are unable to find a few remnants of walls and battlements on the coast of the Thracian Gulf, many wise writers have come to the

WHAT ONE CAN INVENT.

By Hans Christian Andersen.

ONCE upon a time there was a young man who was very anxious to be a poet; he wanted to become one by the following Easter, then he would marry and live by making poetry, which, as he knew, consisted merely in invention. But he could not invent. He was born too late; every subject had been taken up before he came into the world; everything in it had been put into poetry and written about.

"Ah! those lucky fellows who were born a thousand years ago!" said he. "How easily could they become immortal! Lucky were they even who were born a hundred years ago, when there was still something left to write poetry about; now-a-days the world is completely used up as far as poetry is concerned; how should I write any into it?"

He mused over it so long, that he became, poor creature, quite ill and stupid. Not a doctor could do him any good;—but possibly the wise woman might. She lived in the little house close by the field gate, which she used to open for those who drove or rode that way. But she knew well enough how to open more than the gate; she was wiser than the doctor who rides in his own carriage and pays title-tax.

"I must away to her," said the young man.

The house she lived in was small and cleanly, but a dreary place to look at; not a tree nor a flower grew near it. There was a beehive just outside the door—very useful! a small potato-field—very useful! and a ditch, with a sloe-tree which had finished blossoming, and bore fruit, such as draws the mouth together if one tastes it before it has been nipped by the frost.

"Here I see the embodiment of our unpoetic age!" thought the young man; and it was at any rate a thought—a grain of gold that he had found at the wise woman's threshold.

"Write that down," said she; "crumbs are bread, too. I know why you came here; you can't invent, and yet you want to be a poet by Easter."

"Everything is written down," said he; "our time is not like the olden time."

"No," said the woman; "in the olden time wise women were burnt, and poets went about with empty stomachs and holes at their elbows. The present time is very good—indeed it is better than any; but you do not look at the matter in the proper way: you have not opened your ears, and you never say your prayers of an evening. There is abundance of all manner of things to tell and to write poetry about, when one only knows how to tell them. You may extract them from the growth and produce of the earth, draw them from the running or the still water; but you must understand all about it—understand how to catch a sunbeam. Now, do just try my spectacles for once; put my ear-trumpet to your ear, then say your prayers and leave off thinking about yourself."

The last was very difficult to do; more than a wise woman could expect.

He took the spectacles and the ear-trumpet, and forthwith was posted in the middle of the potato-field; she put a large potato into his hand: there was a sound inside it, then came a song with words, a potato-history, very interesting — a story of common life in ten chapters; ten lines, however, were enough.

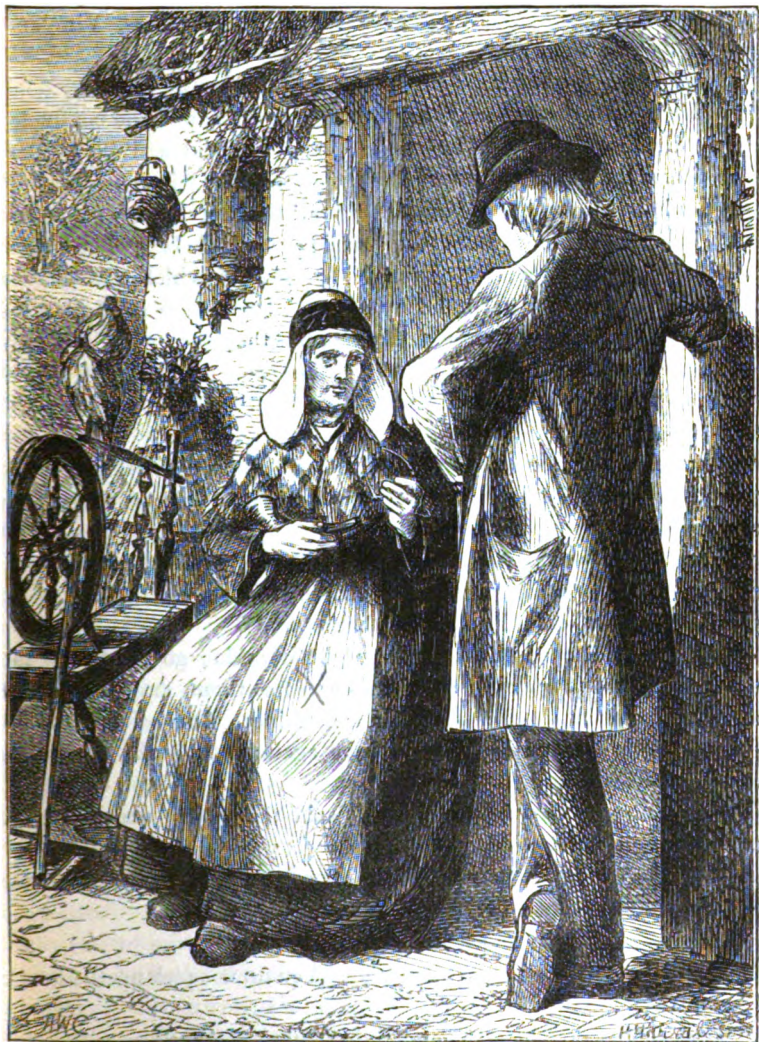
And what sang the potato?

It sang about itself and its family; about the arrival of the potato in Europe, the prejudice it had experienced, and the sufferings it had undergone, before it stood acknowledged, as it is now, to be a greater boon than a lump of gold.

"We were distributed by order of the king at all the town-halls; a circular was sent about setting forth our great utility; but people did not believe in it; at first they did not even know how to plant us. One would dig a hole and throw the whole of his bushel of potatoes into it. Another would stick a potato here and there deep into the soil, and then expect that it would shoot up into a complete tree, from which the potatoes might be shaken down. In due time would come the plant and flowers and the watery berries, then it withered away: no one thought of what lay in the soil—the blessing—the potatoes. Yes, we have had trials and suffering, that is to say, our forefathers, and so we—for it comes to the same thing. There's a story for you."

"Yes, that is quite enough," said the woman. "Now look at the sloe-tree."

"We, too," said the sloe-tree, "have some near relations in the



potato's native land, but more towards the north than where they grow; and there came Norsemen from Norway, and they steered west-

ward through fog and storm till they came to the unknown land, where beyond ice and snow they found plants and green leaves, bushes with the bluish-black fruit of the vine—sloes which the frost turned into ripe grapes—as we are. And they gave the land the names, Vineland, Greenland, and Sloeland.”

“That is quite a romantic narrative,” said the young man.

“Well, now come with me,” said the wise woman; and she conducted him to the beehive. He looked in; what life and activity! Bees were posted in all the avenues, fanning with their wings, in order to keep a wholesome current of air through all the large factory; that was their business. Then from the outside arrived bees, born with panniers on their legs; they brought flower-dust, which was shaken out, sorted, and prepared for honey or wax; some were coming, some going. The queen-bee wanted to fly too, but then they would all have had to go with her, and it was not yet the proper time; but fly she would, so they bit off her majesty’s wings, and then she was obliged to stay.

“Now climb up the side of the ditch,” said the wise woman; “come and look out into the high road, where there are some people to be seen.”

“That was a swarming multitude,” said the young man. “Story upon story! what a buzzing and murmuring! I see nothing but black spots before my eyes! I am falling backwards!”

“No,” said the old woman, “go straightforwards; go right into the swarm of men; keep eyes and ears open for them, and your heart too, and so you will quickly invent something. But before you go, I must have my spectacles and ear-tube again.” And she took them both away from him.

“Now I do not see anything at all,” said the young man; “now I hear nothing more.”

“Well, in that case you cannot be a poet by Easter,” said the wise woman.

“How soon, then?” he asked.

“Neither by Easter nor Whitsuntide. You do not pick up the knack of inventing.”

“What shall I do, then, to get a living out of poetry?”

“That you may manage to do before Shrovetide! Abuse the poets, hit their writings, and you hit them, only don’t let yourself be

frightened; strike quickly, and you will get dumplings enough for both yourself and your wife to live on."


"How some people can invent!" said the young man; and so, since he could not be a poet himself, he abused all the rest who were poets.

This we have from the wise woman. She knows what can be invented.

KIRSTIN'S ADVENTURES.

CHAPTER VII.

TREASURE LOST.



ELL, Angus, said Mrs. Ramsey, as she stood with her husband and Morten on the Himmelsbjerg, "you must allow that this is pretty, after all." Beneath them lay miniature lakes strung upon the placid river, the Guden, like birds' eggs on a thread; around spread the hills, one crowned with dark pines, another plumed with feathery beech, a third wearing a patchwork garment of squares of clover, red and yellow. Beyond them stretched the purple moorland. "And how pleasant are the sounds," continued she, "that come up to us through the stillness! Morten, what birds are those that seem to be answering each other out of the juniper bushes?"

"They are heath-larks, and you may hear also the wild duck's scream, and the water hen's 'cluck, cluck!' down below."

"Ah! and what is more musical—the stroke of the fishermen's oars on the lake, and their voices: what are they singing?"

"Their evening hymn," said Morten. "There are salmon in the lake, and pike, and other fish besides. Once, too, there were wolves in these parts, and wild boars; folk used to dig pits for them."

"We must make haste back," said Mr. Ramsey; "do you not hear the bells?" And as he spoke, from a dozen churches beneath, the sunset bells began to chime. Anxious to reach an inn before evening on little Alec's account, the three made their way through the wood-wilderness that covers the sides of the Himmelsbjerg as quickly as they could. They found the child in an ecstasy of delight at what he had heard and seen during their absence. Kirstin had pointed out to him a whole family of fox-cubs, sitting on the heath at play together